I would be grateful if the present letter and attached statement could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 65, 66, 67, 70, 74, 77, 78 and 80.

(Signed) Colin R. KEATING
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Statement on disarmament issued at Auckland on 10 November 1995 by the Commonwealth Heads of Government

1. Heads of Government noted that changes in international circumstances and changing world opinion have provided an impetus for further practical measures to enhance global stability. They expressed their support for arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation at the global and regional levels.

2. Heads of Government emphasized the importance of the determined pursuit by the nuclear-weapon States of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the ultimate goal of eliminating those weapons, and by all States of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. They noted that these were among the commitments reaffirmed by the States party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which was extended indefinitely at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference.

3. Heads of Government expressed concern at the threat to security posed by other weapons of mass destruction as well as the build-up of conventional weapons beyond the legitimate requirements of self-defence. They urged ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention at the earliest possible date to enable it to enter into force without delay. They reiterated their call for the strengthening of the provisions of the Biological Weapons Convention. Heads of Government called for greater attention to be paid to the problem of the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines and encouraged States parties to the Inhumane Weapons Convention to work constructively towards reaching agreed controls on these weapons.

4. Heads of Government welcomed the decision by the United Kingdom, France and the United States of America to sign the Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga establishing the South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone. They also welcomed the adoption by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) of the Pelindaba Treaty on the establishment of an African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. They expressed the hope that the nuclear-weapon States would be able to accede to the relevant Protocols to the Treaty to ensure its success. They noted with satisfaction the advances made by member countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia. They also expressed support for the establishment of other nuclear-free zones based upon arrangements freely arrived at by all the States in the region concerned.

5. Heads of Government noted the widespread anger caused by the current programmes of nuclear-weapon tests. The overwhelming majority of Heads of Government condemned this continued nuclear testing, which was inconsistent with the undertaking given by the nuclear-weapon States to exercise utmost restraint so as not to affect the ongoing negotiations for the conclusion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty in 1996. These Heads of Government urged the immediate cessation of such testing.

6. Heads of Government emphasized the urgency of completing the negotiations for a comprehensive test-ban treaty in 1996. They stressed the importance they attached to a treaty banning any nuclear-weapon test explosion and any other nuclear explosion. They considered the conclusion of this agreement to be of the highest importance for the international community as a major step towards strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and efforts for global nuclear disarmament, with the ultimate goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons.

---